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COMMUNICATIONS

To the Editor:

Permit me to correct a few of the many errors and misstatements concerning the *New Standard Dictionary*, and concerning me, that were printed in the November number of the *School Review*.

First: The statement is made that by including in its main vocabulary geographical and biographical names "the *New Standard Dictionary* reverts to the type of *omnium gatherum* current in the eighteenth century till it was driven into obscurity by Dr. Johnson." The italicized words misstate the facts.

On p. 50 of another lexicographical work which I have before me, I find no less than twenty-one proper names, biblical, bibliological, biographical, and geographical. As this work was copyrighted in the year 1909—four years before the publication of the *New Standard*—it is clearly evident that the facts have been misstated.

Second: The statement, "for their [the consultors'] untutored intelligence the Greek alphabet is avoided," suggests that its author has overlooked the following: "Bearing in mind that a popular dictionary should aim to *provide* the *information* it contains *in easily accessible form*, words derived from languages whose alphabets differ in the forms of their letters . . . are transliterated so as to be easily read" (*New Standard Dictionary*, p. xvi, column 2). By the editors of the *New Standard* this plan was consistently followed in regard to Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, Sanskrit, etc., and in this respect it differs from the other lexicographical work already referred to, which transliterates some but does not transliterate others.

Third: The suggestion that the *Oxford English Dictionary's* note on the etymology of "mystery" was ignored shows that the writer was not aware that this note was subsequently corrected as erroneous by the editor.

Fourth: The erroneous assertion is made that among other terms, some of which are of doubtful value, the following are unlisted: "hay-rick," "continuance," "set down," "overwhelming." The first of these may be found on p. 1126, in column 2, line 22; the second on pp. 568, 569 (definitions 1 and 4); the third, on p. 2237, column 1; the fourth, under "overwhelm," of which it is the participle, on p. 1762, column 2, definition 4.

Fifth: One reads further: "It is pertinent to inquire why the *Standard's* editors have omitted so many familiar terms as the following: 'cutting' (ignoring an acquaintance); 'mission furniture,' the interjection 'mum,' 'musée,' 'out of sorts,' 'respector of persons,' 'rhetorical question,' 'terrestrial paradise,' 'topic (or key) sentence.'" But the first, which is the present participle of "cut" (verb), is defined on p. 637, column 3, definition 13—"To encounter without salutation; affect not to know; pass intentionally without friendly recognition; ignore; as, *to cut an acquaintance*, etc."; the second is treated on p. 994, in column 2, with the other styles of *furniture*; the third is on p. 1630, column 1 (this may be either the imperative of the verb or a noun, but not, correctly, an interjection, although Dr. Bradley mistakenly so characterizes it in the *New English Dictionary*); the fourth is a French word pure and simple, of which the recognized English equivalent is "museum"; the fifth is on p. 1754 in column 2.

Sixth: The words attributed to me as managing editor I NEVER WROTE AND NEVER USED: "To gauge the work fairly one must bear in mind the managing editor's statement (*Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, October 24, 1913, p. 1058) that forty workers, each with a packet of a hundred blank cards—one for each word—*compiled from dictionaries the definitions.*"

What I did write is: "In compiling the vocabulary, each word was copied on a separate and otherwise blank card, and the cards were strung together in packets of twenty-five. In this form four packets (100 words) were handed to a definer, who was responsible for the first work—the basis of the enterprise. With *dictionaries* immediately *before him*, usually seven in number, and other reference books available, he created a definition that did not infringe the rights of any one of the books, to which, to avoid errors, he made constant and careful reference. This work gave steady employment to forty definers."

I could continue at length, Mr. Editor, but fear to tax even your patience. Therefore, as to the remainder, I will briefly summarize:

Seventh: In the reference to "castle," verb, in chess, which it is claimed is "incorrectly defined," only the transitive sense is quoted; the nine-line definition of the intransitive sense that is used to support the claim of error, and which explains the point made, *is ignored.*

Eighth: "Terms not thoroughly Anglicized are entered without distinguishing mark." These are each grouped under a parent word which is characterized as *French* in each case.

Ninth: The claim that the specific meanings of *en passant* and *en prise* are not given is erroneous. Both are carefully and specifically defined in vocabulary place.

Tenth: The claim that letters are used in describing "rime royal stanza," but not in describing "ottava rima," or "Spenserian stanza" overlooks the fact that they are all given on the same page under "stanza" (p. 2366, column 1).

Eleventh: The statement that the *New Standard* defines "ottava rima" under "Faerie Queene" is misleading. There the statement is made that this poem is written in that meter "with an added Alexandrine line," which is correct. The term itself is defined on p. 1753.

Twelfth: "Under 'chess' we read, 'To commence a game the pieces are [must be] moved alternately'; in fact, the players alternately move, usually beginning not with a piece but with a pawn." This is a misquotation of the text, and the claim that a "pawn" is not a "piece" in chess is not borne out by the definition of "pawn" to be found in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which reads, "One of the *pieces* of smallest size and value in the game of chess"; nor by that in the latest *Webster*, which reads: "*Chess*. The *piece* of least value. . . ."

Thirteenth: "The knight is 'a major piece' under 'knight'; 'a minor piece' under 'chess.'" The definition of "knight" (p. 1361) reads, "a major piece having the supposed value of three pawns"; here the use of "major" clearly indicates the relation of knight to pawn; and the use of "minor," under "chess" (p. 461), clearly indicates the relation of bishop and knight to king, queen, or castle.

Fourteenth: The expression "to *keep* a woman" is defined on p. 1344, column 1, definition "13 [Vulgar.] To support illicitly; as to *keep* a woman."

Fifteenth: The definition of "chemise" is correct. Being worn *under the corset*, it could not be "a combined corset cover and undershirt," which is commonly known as a "slip."

Sixteenth: "The claim to a single vocabulary order cannot be allowed since several classes of terms are listed out of order as phrases under verbs, compounds under prefixes, etc." The claim made will be found on p. xvi of the book itself: "The main purpose kept in view throughout this work has been to present its contents in such a way that the reader shall always have *direct* and *easy access* to the information he seeks. Therefore the plan of placing *all proper names*, whether biblical, classical, or personal, geographical or bibliographical, *in their alphabetical places*

in the main vocabulary was adopted, so that the reader may find the data he requires as readily and expeditiously as possible. This method is a distinct advance upon that formerly in vogue of giving in several separate alphabetical groups, various lists of proper names, classified as Bible, bibliographical, Greek and Roman, biographical, and geographical, often compelling the reader to turn to a number of these alphabetical groups, according to the plan of the work, before finding the information sought."

No claim is made above that can be applied to "phrases under verbs, compounds under prefixes, etc." which are grouped under the parent words by most dictionaries.

The readers of the *School Review* are referred to an anonymous letter which appeared in the *New York Tribune* of November 21, 1913, but no mention is made of the *exposé* that followed that letter in the same paper on November 28 and December 6. Further, the attention of the readers is directed to a letter that appeared in *Science*. Unfortunately, the writer of that letter also misquoted and misrepresented the *New Standard Dictionary*.

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